

THE
INTENTIONS,⁽¹²⁾
ARTICLES,
AND
ORDER,

Agreed on by the
Church of CHRIST,

Meeting in *Black and Grey - Eagle
Street, Spital-Fields;*

AND,
In *Peter's Yard, Castle-Street, near
Liecester-Fields.*

L O N D O N :

Printed by J. HART, in *Popping's-Court, Fleet-
Street*; and Sold by J. LEWIS, in *Bartholomew-Close*, near *West-Smithfield*, and at the
Places above-mention'd..

MDCCXLVI.

INSTRUCTIONS

ARTICLES

AND

O. R. A. R.

Church of CHRIST

Meeting in B. & C. - High
Street, London

In the Year 1840

Printed by J. G. & J. W. ...
at the ...

Intentions, Articles, and Order, &c.

1. **T**HE intention or end of our joining together in church-fellowship, is, that we may manifest (*a*) our love and unity. — That we may establish (*b*) and edify one another, in our most holy faith. — That we may be (*c*) a pillar and ground of truth, striving together for the faith of the gospel. — That we may be (*d*) useful to others. — That we may have an opportunity of (*e*) observing all those things our Saviour has commanded us. — That we may have (*f*) a watchful care over one another ; and have an opportunity of making that holy separation, mention'd 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and (*g*) withdrawing ourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly.

2. If we have an opportunity, we would preach the gospel where it has not been preach'd, and when souls are gather'd to Christ, would gather them by mutual consent into (*b*) church order and fellowship, according to the gospel, and then commend them to the Lord, on whom they believe.

3. We would also hold (*i*) communion with other churches (whether those we may be instrumental in planting, or others) for mutual fellowship and useful-

(*a*) *John* xvii. 21. (*b*) 1 *Thess.* v. 11. *Jude* xx.
(*c*) 1 *Tim.* iii. 15. *Phil.* i. 27. (*d*) *Gal.* v. 13. vi. 10.
(*e*) *Mat.* xxviii. 20. (*f*) 1 *Thess.* v. 14. *Rom.* xv. 14.
(*g*) 2 *Thess.* iii. 6. (*h*) *Acts* xiv. 23. (*i*) *Acts* xv. 2 *Cor.*
viii. 14.

ness, and in this way saluting, supplying, exhorting, &c. in love, manifest our union with the whole body of Christ on earth; but as we are sure (*k*) no church has any authority over us from *Jesus Christ*, so neither are we tolerated to take authority over any other church or churches. Neither are we inquisitive after that plan of government which relates to more congregations than one, it being *entirely* unscriptural; and as to congregational government, we have a sufficient supply of instruction in scripture, and find that such single congregations, so govern'd, and union betwixt such congregations, so maintain'd, are sufficient to answer all the ends of a church of Christ on earth.

Articles agreed on by the CHURCH.

1. **T**HAT the word of God, according to its plain and obvious sense, shall be the standard of our faith, practice, and discipline, *2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17.*
 2. That we will be content to drop all expressions which are not the plain words of the Holy Ghost, *2 Tim. iii. 17.*
 3. That no one shall be master, or lord over the rest, *Mat. xxiii. 10. 1 Pet. v. 3.*
 4. That every thing be transacted by mutual consent, *Acts xv. 1, &c. 1 Cor. v. 4.*
 5. That the whole body shall appoint each member his proper place, or rather shall place them in that station for which the Holy Ghost seems to have appointed and fitted them, *Acts i. 15, 21, 27. Acts vi. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.*
 6. That the scriptures seeming to oppose one another in the points of *particular election*, and *universal redemption*, shall at no time be expounded in opposition to one another, but shall be left, as express'd by the Holy Ghost, *2 Tim. iii. 15.*
 7. That in those things wherein we have not the
- (*k*) *Matt. xx. 25, 26, 27. Luke xxii. 25. 26. 2 Cor. xii. 13. Rev. i. 4. Chap. ii. Chap. iii.*
 express

expres word * of God to direct us, we will leave each brother to liberty of conscience, apprehending that this and the preceding rule, is a method of preventing useless contentions, and of leaving every one to be taught of God, and preserving a catholick spirit, and peace and unity in the church, *Rom. xiv. 5.*

Of the Order and Rule of the CHURCH.

I. **T**HE rule of the church is committed into the hands of elders, who in the scripture are also call'd † bishops, or overseers of the church, they are chosen by the church to their office; and they are also to determine every thing by approbation of the church.

II. Of these elders, or bishops, there are (*a*) two sorts, some that rule only, others that also labour in the word and doctrine; of these we have also two sorts, the one (*b*) a pastor, who feeds the flock, taking the oversight of the whole, administering the ordinances, &c. the others (*c*) teachers, that wait on teaching as they have opportunity.

* *The Holy Ghost hath not seen it necessary, that every minute circumstance should be given in express words, for it is the mind and will of Christ, discover'd by the scriptures, that immediately affects the minds of believers unto obedience, whether discover'd by express words, or by just consequence of what is so express'd.*
 ☞ See Observ. concerning the church, p. 14. from l. 1.

† *The word ἐπίσκοπος, translated Bishops, Phil. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 1, 2. Tit. i. 7. is translated Overseers, Acts xx. 28. and signifies the teaching and ruling Elders, of which there were many in every single congregation, as appears by the above mention'd scriptures, compare Acts xx. 17. with v. 28. and Titus i. 5. with v. 7.*
 ☞ Other sort of Bishops the Holy Ghost makes no mention of.

(*a*) 1 Tim. v. 17. (*b*) 1 Pet. v. 1, 2. Rev. ii. 1, &c. (*c*) Rom. xii. 7.

III. The

III. The employment of the elders that rule, is,

1. To enquire into, and be thoroughly satisfied concerning those who desire to belong to us, and recommend them to the church's approbation.

2. To consider of things, that from time to time are for the order and well-being of the church, and to bring them before the church to be consider'd and approv'd.

3. To watch over the flock, that they walk agreeably to the exhortations wrote to the churches by the apostles, and in other parts of scripture, relating to the new-testament church, and where there is any disorderly walking contrary thereto, to endeavour to remedy it, and if that will not do, to lay it before the church, that they may suspend or exclude, as shall appear necessary.

4. We have also (*d*) deacons, whose business is to take care of all the outward matters of the church, in every respect.

5. We have also (*e*) elder-women, or eldresses, or (*f*) deaconesses, who act among the sisters, as elders and deacons among the brethren.

6. Besides meeting together for hearing the word, and administration of the sacraments, we have (*g*) fellowship-meetings of married men, single men, married women, and single women, to converse together concerning *Jesus Christ*; in which we admit also those who do not belong to the church, but have signified their desire (*h*) to have fellowship with us, and whom we also approve of. — We have also meetings for (*i*) singing, and (*k*) reading the scriptures, in which meetings suitable exhortations may be given, as there is occasion.

(*d*) 1 *Tim.* iii. 8. (*e*) *Rom.* xvi. 3, 12. *Phil.* 4. 3. *Acts* xxi. 9. 1 *Cor.* xi 5. (*f*) *Rom.* xvi. 1, where the *Greek* word, translated *servant*, is *Διακονος*, or *deaconess*. (*g*) 1 *John* i. 7. *Mal.* iii. 16. (*h*) Which desire they may signify, at any time, to any of the preachers. (*i*) *Eph.* v. 19. (*k*) *John* v. 39.

(vii)
7. When any brother or sister propose themselves to belong to the church, that we apprehend to be sound in the faith, we do not reject them, or put them by upon any other reason than we would cast out or suspend a member that is among us, and with respect to any failing or imperfection we may see in their behaviour, we would exhort, reprove, and in all respects deal with them as we would with any other member of the church, 'till the time is convenient to take them in.

8. We recommend strictly to every member, the consideration and practice of 1 Cor. xii. from the 14th to the 27th verses.

9. Every member has the same liberty, without difference, to propose any thing to be consider'd for the good of the whole; and if any one apprehends any thing wrong in the church, they may either mention it before the church, or communicate it to the elders, that if it is of consequence, it may be made known to the church, and redress'd; — and in case of offence between any of the members, we would recommend our Saviour's rule, Matt. xviii. 15, 16, 17. and whoever acts in such cases in a contrary manner to this, we look upon to be tattlers and busy-bodies, 1 Tim. v. 13. disturbing the peace of the church.

10. We recommend, that in every family there be reading of the scriptures, and prayer every day; and also by every single member.

11. We reckon it belongs to the church to take care that the members be not * *unequally yoked*, 2 Cor. vi. 14. In this case we don't think it right for the church to chuse husbands and wives, but when a brother has thoughts concerning a woman to make

* *This scripture, tho' it may refer to a godly separating ourselves in church-fellowship from unbelievers, yet it also strongly infers this, that if it is right for us to separate in church-fellowship from the rest of the world, it is also as certainly right to avoid such union as marriage with those who believe not.*

hee

her his wife, before he makes it known to her, we recommend this, that he make known his mind to one or more of the elders concerning it

Also when a sister has had a proposal to her, which she approves of, that she communicate it to an elders, by which proceeding, we apprehend many idle and distracting thoughts concerning these things, and foolish behaviour, unbecoming christians, may be prevented. —And, also, the brethren, or sisters, have an opportunity of being advis'd for their good, that if the elder or elders conceive it wrong, they may have an opportunity of dissuading them. If they conceive it right, they may be advis'd, and assisted therein, and all things finally be done by the approbation of the whole church.

12. Also we think it right, that those who are about to make any considerable alteration in their outward affairs, or borrow or lend any considerable sum of money, or are in any dilemma or extremity, should advise with the deacons, whose business is to enquire into, and assist in those matters.

For more particular information in our church-matters, we refer the reader to the Observations concerning the church of Christ.



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